the philosophers, a notion derived from the things themselves but in agreement with reason, as is abundantly clear from our own ontological demonstrations (*Ont.* §142), and not, as is the case with Spinoza (§677n), arbitrarily fabricated for the sake of his preconceived hypothesis. Indeed, since nominal definitions are arbitrary it appears to come to nothing that what Spinoza calls *attribute* is commonly termed *essence*, for those things that are demonstrated concerning essence must pertain to attributes in the sense expressed by Spinoza, and in this way it appears that the very same truth holds even if it is expressed with different words. And no doubt this would have been the case, except that nominal definitions have been abused through error, especially when they are formed out of ambiguous words, of which sort are Spinoza's definitions, as no one will deny who uses sufficient acuity in examining them. For when it comes to notions and also definitions (*Log.* §152), their reality must be demonstrated (*Log.* §717f), before you use these same things in order to derive other things from them, lest through using deceptive notions in the place of true ones you should fall into error (*Log.* §629), especially since with nominal definitions it is not yet evident that the defined thing is even possible (*Log.* §191). Yet Descartes, whose principles Spinoza embraces insofar as his hypothesis allows (and otherwise changed in conformity with it) (§677n), takes a notion to be real if he clearly and distinctly perceives it (or as Spinoza prefers to say, *conceives*) without having sufficiently defined clear and distinct perception. Accordingly, Spinoza made little effort in showing the reality of his definitions, but he uses these principles as if they had already been granted. We are correct in noting, therefore, the confusion, that has been made of the essential and an attribute by the same author, and no Spinozist can deny this confusion of an attribute with an essential determination since Spinoza himself explicitly says that one perceives an attribute as constituting the essence of a substance (§673); and the *essentialia*, or what amounts to the same thing, the essential determinations (*Ont.* §222) constitute the essence of a being (*Ont.* §143).

§680. (*The other mistake in this regard.*) *The notion of substance incorrectly enters into the notion of attribute in Spinoza's definition.* For Spinoza confuses attribute with the essential determinations which constitute the essence of a being (*Ont.* §143) so that attribute is for him what others call the essence of a being, and so it is the first thing that is grasped concerning a being (*Ont.* §144). However, those things that pertain to the notion of a being are understood without the notion of substance, as is abundantly clear from the ontological demonstrations that are found together in my *Ontology*, part I, chapter 3, section 2,[13] and it is rather the case that the notion of substance insofar as it conforms to its ordinary usage (*Ont.* §771) presupposes the notion of being (*Ont.* §768). The notion of substance therefore incorrectly enters into the notion of attribute in Spinoza's definition.

It is not without reason that Spinoza inserts the notion of substance into the notion of attribute. For, since he assumes the reality of his definitions, and does not prove it, on account of the fact that he appears to conceive of what is contained in the definitions and, moreover, he has convinced himself that those things are true which we conceive or have a concept of (or if you prefer to speak with Descartes, which we clearly and distinctly perceive); so, in this way the

[13] A reference to the section titled "*De notione entis* [*Concerning the notion of being*]," in the *Ontologia* (§§132–78; cf. especially §§134–9).

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(§677). However, in mathematics, that is called finite to which limits can be assigned, that is, limits to where it begins and where it ends, or beyond which it can be increased (*Ont.* §798). The limits of lines are points (*Geom.* §11), and so if two points can be assigned to a plane where a line begins and where it ends, then that line is called finite or limited. And therefore, some thing is called finite or limited insofar as bounds or limitations are connected with the intrinsic determinations through which it is conceived (*Ont.* §142) and beyond which their reality does not extend in the slightest (*Ont.* §468). Therefore, just as the line is not called finite because it can be limited by some other line but because limits are conceived on both ends beyond which it does not extend; so too any given thing cannot be called finite because it is limited by another of the same nature, or is conceived as possibly being so limited, but because these limits are connected with it, beyond which the realities that are understood as being in that thing cannot be increased. Indeed, when it happens that there is no contradiction for some thing that another thing should exist at its boundaries or limits, beyond which its reality does not extend, one does not understand that this has taken place because the second thing exists at the limits of the first, but rather it is clear that the second is able to exist at the limits of the first because the first has limits by means of which the reality of the same is constrained. So, if a straight line on a plane were not limited on either side by two given points, then it would not be possible to draw other straight lines through its limits, that is, through those same points beyond which the length of the finite line does not extend. Thus, Spinoza wrongly defines a thing finite in its own kind as that which can be limited by another thing of the same nature, when he ought rather to have defined it in terms of the limits that are connected with the realities through which it is conceived and beyond which they cannot be increased, that is, in our manner of speaking, in terms of the limits that are connected with the intrinsic determinations that enter into our notion of the thing, which limits are inseparable from the determinations for as long as one wants to represent that thing. This is the first item that was to be demonstrated.

The phrase that a thing "is limited by another of the same nature" is not sufficiently perspicuous that it would be adequately clear what it is supposed to signify. For this reason, Spinoza adds (intending to explain this lest these seem like sounds without meaning) that a body is called finite because we always conceive another that is greater. Even if this is true (*Ont.* §825), it nonetheless does not make the obscure words through which the definition is given better understood, but rather only clouds the definition with more obscurity. For, through the fact that for a given body another greater one is conceivable, we do not grasp why there are such limits to its magnitude, but rather another greater one is conceivable because it [i.e., the first body] has these limits to its magnitude, which are understood to exist in it apart from whether we give a thought to another that is greater. To be limited by another of the same nature, therefore, cannot signify the same as containing the reason in itself for the limits that exist in other beings. Nor is it clear that, through the fact that a greater body is conceived for a given body, that we can thereby grasp that a body can coexist with it which hinders it from being greater or smaller on account of existing at its limits, as these words were bound to have been interpreted according to what has been said in the demonstration of the first point. Since, therefore, words are called

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ambiguous when their signification cannot be determined with certainty, it cannot be denied that Spinoza defines a thing finite in its own kind, or a limited thing, ambiguously. Which was the second point to be proved.

This definition is of signal importance for Spinozism: for, seduced by the ambiguity of these words, one readily assents to the infinite and unitary character of substance, and exempts finite things from the number of substances and, consequently, holds these for modifications of the attributes of the single and infinite substance which alone exists and can possibly exist, and thereby joins with Spinozism (§671). I thus want my readers to weigh carefully what we have said, particularly concerning the present definition but also the others, so that we gain an intimate understanding of Spinozism and learn to recognize how far removed it is from the truth.

§686. (*Spinoza's error in defining a finite or limited thing.*) *Spinoza errs when he assumes that a thing finite in its own kind is always capable of being limited by another of the same nature.* For when he intends to explain the definition in which he assumes this, he says that thought is limited by thought but body is not limited by thought nor thought by body. In virtue of their use in the demonstration of Ip8, these ambiguous words (§685) can be understood in no other way than that a finite being can neither be nor be conceived unless another finite thing of the same nature exists and is conceived, and in which that is found by which it is understood why these limits rather than others exist in it, that is, which contains in itself the sufficient reason for the limits of another thing (*Ont.* §56). Since, therefore, when some finite thing is actually posited, the limits of another thing are simultaneously posited (*Ont.* §118), limits in fact denote a lack of further reality (*Ont.* §468), one which prevents a greater reality from being able to exist in another being. According to Spinoza, the soul is a thinking thing, or a thought, and therefore must, as something finite, be limited by another soul, that is, it cannot be nor be conceived without another soul which prevents its limits from extending further; consequently, the sufficient reason for the original limitations, which are connected to its essential determinations, must be in another soul. Yet, the power of the soul, in which consists its essence and nature (*Rat. Psych.* §§66–7) is materially limited by the position of the organic body in the universe, and indeed in such a way that it could not perceive clearly unless something acted in that body or some change was induced in the organs of sense and so in the formal constitution of the organs of sense, insofar namely as such changes are induced in those organs (*Rat. Psych.* §63). Yet is there anyone who would say that it is not possible for these limitations to actually be or be conceived in the soul unless another soul actually is or is conceived which prevents our soul from being able to perceive more objects than those which act upon our sensory organs, and from perceiving these more clearly and distinctly than the constitution of our sensory organs permits? Rather, since no reason is required for why *essentialia* exist in something (*Ont.* §159), it is understood through these limitations themselves that they are conjoined with the power of the soul. Thus, Spinoza affirms what must be denied (*Log.* §200), and since one who affirms what is to be denied errs (*Log.* §624), it follows that Spinoza errs when he assumes in his definition of a thing finite in its own kind, for instance a thought or finite thinking thing, that it must be limited by another of the same nature, such as another thought or another finite thinking thing.

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No doubt the notion of a sufficient reason had occurred to Spinoza, just like it had to Descartes (*Ont.* §321n), whose principles he was educated in (§667n), and through it he confusedly cognized the principle of sufficient reason as well, but a distinct notion of the same eluded him; from where, having erred in the principle's application, he sought a sufficient reason for the original limitations which are connected with the essences of finite things. Since no internal reason is given (*Ont.* §156), he concluded that there must be an external one, which he wrongly confuses with a cause (*Ont.* §321), as it were, with a source of its determination, which contradicts this principle because it does not permit such a cause (*Ont.* §883), as is clear enough to those who attend to the original limitations of the soul. For the soul's perceptions are limited or finite, where these limits indicate a lack of further reality (*Ont.* §468), insofar as they are confused and obscure and consequently not distinct enough (*Emp. Psych.* §§32, 39), and so everything in the perceived thing that might be separately enumerated is not represented distinctly (*Emp. Psych.* §§24, 38 & *Rat. Psych.* §98). The reason why these are confused and obscure is to be found in the original limitations connected with the soul's essence (*Ont.* §144), which limitations we are bound to admit in virtue of the principle of contradiction (*Ont.* §142), insofar, namely, as it is not contradictory for such limitations to exist in the power of perception as it is experienced in the soul. If Spinoza's ontological notions had been sufficiently distinct, and he had made fitting use of the principles of contradiction and sufficient reason, as we have done in ontology, he would never have become entangled in the confusions that have been uncovered in his definitions, nor would he have derived his concepts from a hypothesis antecedently framed in his mind, but he would have derived his first notions from the things themselves, notions which he would have himself discovered his hypothesis does not at all agree with.

§687. (*The principles of Spinozism.*) *Spinozism rests upon uncertain, confused, and ambiguous principles.* For Spinoza endeavors to demonstrate his hypothesis concerning the single, infinite substance, where everything else proceeds from the necessary modifications of its attributes, which is to say Spinozism (§671), on the basis of his definitions and axioms. Indeed, he relies upon the Cartesian principle that whatever is clearly and distinctly perceived (or conceived, in his own terms) is true, and accordingly does not demonstrate that which he assumes in his definitions. Yet principles for a proof, as definitions are (*Log.* §562), which themselves require proof but are assumed without it, are uncertain (*Log.* §843). Spinoza therefore uses uncertain principles in demonstrating his hypothesis, and consequently Spinozism rests upon uncertain principles. Which was the first point to be proved.

Furthermore, in his definitions he confuses attributes with essential determinations (§679), modes with attributes, properly so called (§681), and with being from another (§682), and lastly substance with being from itself (§684). Since then he takes diverse things to be the same in his definitions, he fails to distinguish sufficiently that which exists in things that can be enumerated individually. Just as that perception is confused when we do not distinguish all that which can be enumerated separately in the clearly perceived thing (*Emp. Psych.* §39), and a notion is confused if we are not able to distinguish its marks at all (*Log.* §88), so the notions that correspond to Spinoza's definitions (*Log.* §152) are confused. And indeed, it is clear from the demonstration of the previous point that these definitions are the principles upon which Spinozism rests; therefore, Spinozism rests upon confused principles, which was the second point to be proved.

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Lastly, Spinoza not only defines a finite or limited thing ambiguously (§685), the definition of which is of great importance for Spinozism (§685n), but it is also clear from what we have shown and noted concerning the remaining definitions that almost all of his terms are quite ambiguous so that if one attends to them solely, one is scarcely able to come up with a conjecture as to what it should signify. Since it is apparent from that which was demonstrated in the proof of the first point that Spinozism rests on these definitions as on principles, it is therefore entirely clear that Spinozism rests on ambiguous principles. Which was the third point to be demonstrated.

We see then how slippery the foundation of the whole of Spinozism is, so that no assent is merited even if one takes nothing else into consideration but Spinoza's definitions. Yet no one should be surprised that Spinoza could have been able to persuade himself that this foundation was so firm and unshakeable that he could take the system he constructed upon it as demonstrated, and that it could even contend with geometrical truths concerning its evidence. For having embraced as true the Cartesian principle that whatever is clearly and distinctly perceived (or, as he preferred to express it, whatever is so conceived) is true, he was hardly concerned with the proof of what was assumed in the definitions. In this way it came about that he built his system upon uncertain principles. Neither he nor Descartes accounted for clear and distinct perception (or conception as he calls it) in such a way as to distinguish the intellect from the senses and the imagination; but both contented themselves with a confused idea, one engendered in the mind by means of a handful of examples. Thus it happened that he seemed to clearly and distinctly perceive (or conceive) that which was in no way grasped with a distinct and determinate notion, and he was sufficiently content with the clarity of obscure and ambiguous terms that were borrowed from an hypothesis already conceived in his mind before he gave a thought to its demonstration. We learn from the example of Spinoza how deceptive the Cartesian criterion of truth is, even if one should explain clear and distinct perception to the fullest extent using concepts and trace it back to an act of the intellect, since in this way we do not keep other deceptive notions at bay but rather admit them all too easily. Thus, just like Tschirnhaus in the *Medicina mentis*, he spent vain effort in embellishing and commending it to the great extent that he did.[16] That Spinoza has in fact confused everything in his definitions that, as far as possible, should be considered separately from one another is to be attributed to his lack of knowledge of first philosophy. For because of this he fashions such definitions as are required for his preconceived hypothesis, doing so before he considers the principles upon which he would build his system; rather, should one wish to acquire real concepts and to avoid deceptive ones, one would have instead proceeded from the knowledge of the things themselves, from which ontological notions are to be derived through abstraction. We see, therefore, how great a need there is for a properly cultivated first philosophy, that is, one that can be traced back to true notions which are also distinct and determinate, unless one prefers to amble blindly concerning the most difficult things and to fall headlong into all sorts of errors. Indeed,

[16] Ehrenfried Walther von Tschirnhaus (1651–1708), an intimate of Spinoza's and early mentor to Wolff. His *Medicina mentis sive tentamen genuinae logicae* was originally published in 1687, with a revised text entitled *Medicina mentis sive artis inveniendi praecepta generalia* following in 1695. Tschirnhaus' discussion of the Cartesian principle can be found in the preface of the latter edition.

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there is no other reason than this for why we have begun the study of philosophy from first philosophy and shone light through it on the remaining parts of philosophy.

§688. (*On what notion Spinoza has of extension.*) *Spinoza has none other but a confused notion of extension.* For concerning the idea of extension, Spinoza like Descartes is content with that notion we have by means of sense perception and does not provide a definition of it—just as we are typically content with the idea of color which we perceive by means of the senses, and neither do we provide any definition of it. However, we do not perceive extension in the body other than confusedly (*Cosmol.* §224); Spinoza, therefore, has none other than a confused notion of extension.

The reason that neither Descartes, nor Spinoza after him, realized this was that the former did not explain by means of a distinct notion what it is to clearly and distinctly perceive (or, according to the latter, to clearly and distinctly conceive). Hence, Descartes took himself to perceive extension clearly and distinctly insofar as he was aware that he perceived it in bodies, and to that extent he judged that it was not the same as thought but was something different from it because thought and extension did not appear to be the same; on account of this as well, Spinoza purported to conceive of extension, agreeing with Descartes concerning the matter itself but only changing the words.

§689. (*Spinoza's error concerning the notion of extension.*) *Spinoza wrongly takes extension for something real.* For Spinoza takes extension to be an attribute of God, through which His infinite and eternal substance is expressed, and so for something real (§671). Now extension is a phenomenon (*Cosmol.* §225) and not something real (*Cosmol.* §225n); therefore, Spinoza wrongly takes it for something real.

Whoever recognizes that extension is not a real thing existing in some being but that it rather supposes some other real thing whereby, when that thing is confusedly perceived, extension seems to exist in it (just as color is not itself something real existing in body but supposes another real thing in body, through the confused perception of which the idea of color is produced), and whoever has sufficient insight into how the idea of extension arises in the soul (*Rat. Psych.* §103), I say that person will also recognize this particular absurdity on the part of Spinozism. Spinoza simply assumes with Descartes that extension is something real that expresses the essence of corporeal substance, and does not prove this on account of his complete reliance upon the spurious principle of clear and distinct perception. We have concluded, however, on the basis of true notions that extension is not something real, but a phenomenon sufficiently grounded in real things (*Cosmol.* §225).[17] But if Descartes and Spinoza had paid the same attention to extension that they applied in examining the idea of color, they would have easily avoided the error noted in this section.

§690. (*The resolvability of the notion of extension into other notions*). *Extension in Spinoza's sense is not conceived through itself.* For extension is the coexistence of a

[17] Here, and in what follows, Wolff is drawing on Leibniz's idealist account of space, and his resulting contention that spatially extended objects are merely "well-founded phenomena"; on the former, see Leibniz's fifth letter to Clarke, §47, and on the latter see, for instance, the letter to Des Bosses of May 29, 1716 (both of these texts are translated in G. W. Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, edited and translated by R. Ariew and D. Garber [Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989]; pp. 201–6 and 337–9.)

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number of things existing externally to one another as one thing, and is constituted by the union of a number of things existing externally to one another (*Ont.* §548), if one takes the notion in its received signification (*Ont.* §567) and explicates it distinctly in conformity with the common way of speaking (*Ont.* §569). That is to say that extension is constituted by the extension of bodies, which are aggregates of simple substances (*Cosmol.* §176), arising from that which is not extended (*Cosmol.* §223), namely, from the aggregation of the elements itself (*Cosmol.* §221). We do not perceive extension other than insofar as we represent many things existing externally to one another as one (*Ont.* §548), which is to say we perceive it (*Emp. Psych.* §24), namely, by means of the idea of the extension of bodies arising in the soul when it confuses the diverse internal states of the elements into a single one (*Rat. Psych.* §103). If, therefore, one wanted to distinctly perceive or cognize extension, without which bodies cannot be perceived (or conceived as Spinoza puts it) (*Cosmol.* §122), it is necessary that one cognizes the elements (the aggregates of which are bodies), their internal states, and how through these many are represented as though they exist in one; or, if one prefers to speak generally, it is necessary that one cognizes what those many things are which exist externally to one another, and how they can coexist as one thing. The cognition of extension thus presupposes the cognition of many things existing externally to one another and of their union, and in particular it presupposes the cognition of the extension of bodies or simple substances and of their internal state and the manner in which they are aggregated such that one comes to be from many. Since, according to Spinoza that is conceived through itself the cognition of which does not suppose the cognition of another thing (Ip8s2), it is evident that extension in Spinoza's sense is not at all conceived through itself.

It is not without reason then that in the demonstration of the present proposition we connect what is claimed in general concerning the notion of extension in first philosophy with that which is demonstrated in particular concerning the extension of bodies in cosmology and concerning the idea of this extension in rational psychology. For through those claims taken from cosmology, it is more clearly evident what those things are whose cognition is presupposed in the distinct cognition of the extension of substance, and through claims seconded from rational psychology, it is more clearly understood how the confused idea of extension, having arisen in the soul from the limitations of the perceptive power, differs from the distinct notion that belongs to the intellect (*Emp. Psych.* §275). Even if the Spinozist should be unwilling to assent to our cosmological and psychological principles, which would require a detailed presentation to convince him of, nonetheless the ontological principles are sufficient and no one calls these into doubt provided only that they are not entirely lacking in attentiveness or possessed of a hostile mind, unfamiliar with the truth, seeking to doggedly defend their own preconceived hypotheses. If Spinoza had recognized that the extension which we perceive by means of the senses is perceived only confusedly, just as is the case with colors, then he would never have taken this notion for a distinct one, and traced it back to the intellect as opposed to the senses and imagination. He was deceived as long as he convinced himself that nothing could be distinctly explicated concerning which he did not see how it must be explicated; yet his inability to see was due to the neglect of first philosophy. For if he had inquired into the notion of being in general and the notions of composition and the simple in particular, as we have done in our first philosophy, he would not have taken a notion of

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extension which depends on the senses for a distinct one and as irresolvable into other, simpler notions. Indeed, if he had only attended to that which we perceive concerning corporeal substance by means of the senses themselves, and had employed more acumen in separating those things that are different from one another, then he could not have helped but notice that extension presupposes the cognition of a striving and counter-striving substance and thus that it cannot be cognized without that, and so is not conceived through itself.

§691. (*Why extension in Spinoza's sense cannot be an attribute of God.*) *Extension in Spinoza's sense cannot be an attribute of God.* For extension in Spinoza's sense is not conceived through itself (§690). Now since according to him any attribute of the single substance must be conceived through itself (Ip10), as he himself infers there from the definitions of substance and attribute (§§673, 674), so extension cannot be an attribute of God, whom Spinoza recognizes as substance (§672).

We have indeed already shown that God cannot be extended (*Nat. Theol.* I, §8 & II, §38); but here, where we are undertaking to overturn Spinozism, we had to demonstrate the same thing from Spinoza's own principles. As for various others who make extension into an attribute of God and are convinced that God cannot be conceived without extension,[18] they may discern whether they grant more to Spinoza than is suitable and so they may consider carefully whether this error easily degenerates into a crypto-Spinozism, as will be established more clearly in what follows.

§692. (*Spinoza's error in attributing extension to God.*) Since one errs who affirms what should be denied (*Log.* §624), and it must be denied that extension in Spinoza's sense is an attribute of the divine (§691); it follows that *Spinoza errs insofar as he maintains that extension is an attribute of God, or that God is an extended thing* (IIp2).

It is not necessary for us to overturn the previously given demonstration to which Spinoza refers at this point,[19] for it is grounded on principles which we reject as uncertain, confused, and ambiguous (§687). It more than suffices that we have shown that even in Spinoza's sense, that is, according to his own definitions, extension cannot be an attribute of God. Nor would it help to respond that our demonstration depends upon our own principles and our notion of extension (*Log.* §992), on the basis of which, namely, we have concluded that it is not possible for extension to be conceived, in Spinoza's sense, through itself (§690), and therefore that it is only according to our principles that he is said to have erred. For error cannot be refuted other than on the basis of true principles, that is, other than through directly opposing what lies at the basis of the deviation, since from such faulty principles it is not possible to infer anything according to the form of correct reasoning; otherwise, unless one agreed concerning the truth of the principles, then any attempt at a refutation would only be an *ad hominem* argument, and neither would it be decided that that which is rejected is false, but only that it cannot agree with correct principles. No one therefore will

[18] For examples, see §694n below.

[19] The demonstration of IIp2 reads: "The demonstration of this proceeds in the same way as that of the preceding proposition," where the previous proposition (IIp1) is: "Thought is an attribute of God, or God is a thinking thing."

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find fault with the fact that an error is decisively checked by a principle that is assumed as true but not acknowledged as such by the erring party.

§693. (*The infinity of extension is not proved by Spinoza.*) *Spinoza has not proved infinite extension to be possible.* For, from the fact that one can arbitrarily remove limits from extension as it is confusedly perceived by the imagination, it does not follow that an extended thing without any limits is possible; rather, the possibility of this notion, which is formed through arbitrary determination, must be proved as such notions are no less capable of being impossible as possible (*Log.* §720ff): Spinoza never does this however because he relies upon the ambiguous principle that that is true which is clearly and distinctly perceived (or conceived as he says), and accordingly he incorrectly holds extension for something real (§689) and so takes it to be possible without limits; it is assuredly clear, then, that he has not proved infinite extension to be possible.

Moreover, even though he makes extension into an attribute of God (§671) and all divine attributes are taken to be infinite (§672), it is not understood from this that there is infinite extension and that it is therefore possible (*Ont.* §170). For extension in Spinoza's sense cannot be an attribute of God (§691), and consequently that infinite extension is possible is in no way proven when it is taken to be an attribute of God. Accordingly, nowhere in the principles by means of which Spinoza advanced his hypothesis is to be found that from which it follows that infinite extension is possible.

Since then Spinoza himself supplied no proof of infinite extension, and neither is it possible to prove this through his principles (provided one does not want to infer something which does not follow from them at all), it is completely evident that the possibility of infinite extension has in no way been proven by him.

The possibility of infinite extension, if it does not otherwise conflict with truth, is not capable of being proven so easily. For, since an extended thing arises from something which is not extended (*Cosmol.* §223), when namely the elements of material things, or simple substances (*Cosmol.* §182), are aggregated together (*Cosmol.* §221); so, if one intends to demonstrate the possibility of infinite or unlimited extension, it must be demonstrated that simple substances are possible, through whose aggregation into phenomena infinite extension arises. Is there anyone, however, other than a complete stranger to the doctrine of elements, who does not see that proving this is something that one should not take on lightly? For it is not easy to undertake to demonstrate whether infinite extension is possible or impossible. Here imaginary things are mistaken for real ones, even if Spinoza professes to be repulsed by the Cartesian terminology of clear and distinct *perception* so that he substituted *conception* for it, lest we should confuse that which is imagined with what is understood or comprehended only by the intellect. Spinoza never took up the possibility of infinite extension, but maintained that through it the infinite essence of God is expressed: if only he had not confused the perception which belongs to the imagination with a distinct notion formed by the intellect. Nor is it enough for us to perceive the extension of bodies confusedly by means of the senses and, insofar as we imagine it in abstraction, to sense in ourselves nothing contradictory as we continue to add, or arbitrarily posit, more to the extension no matter how great its magnitude, so that we infer from this that an infinite extension is possible, and that an infinite extended thing is likewise possible. For even were this sort of argument to be permitted, I cannot know

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extension beyond that which is in God, one that would be opposed to it, which is just what happens with Spinoza. Therefore, it is hardly difficult for this same individual to agree that bodies arise from some divine attribute, namely, infinite extension, modified through divine power, and in this way, quite in keeping with Spinoza, bodies are nothing other than some mode which expresses God's essence in a certain and determinate way insofar as He is considered as an extended thing; indeed, as we have just seen with More and Raphson, an attribute, namely infinite extension, expresses God's infinite and truly unlimited essence in a manner quite in agreement with Spinoza. It is, therefore, clear how necessary it is for the confused notion of extension to be rendered distinct, just as we have done in first philosophy (*Ont.* §548), and through this to remove the extension of bodies from among the number of real things, as has been done by us (*Cosmol.* §226) when we uncovered the true source of this notion (*Cosmol.* §221 & *Rat. Psych.* §103).

§695. (*What sort of power it is that produces bodies, according to Spinoza.*) *The power of God, through which bodies are produced according to Spinoza, is nothing else but a power to modify.* For according to Spinoza, bodies arise through the modification of some divine attribute, namely, infinite extension (§671). Now as the attribute of God is modified through the power of God, insofar namely as limits are introduced by the unlimited, so that that is expressed in a certain and determinate way which is expressed through the attribute as infinite and unlimited (IId1), it follows that the power of God, through which bodies are produced, is nothing else but a power to modify.

Spinoza evidently attributes a power to God, as substance, through which everything is and takes place; otherwise, we would have no sufficient reason for that which exists in the world, nor would we be able to understand whence they exist. Since, however, Spinoza rejected the power to create as gratuitously fabricated, nothing remains for God but the power to modify, and this he judged to suffice for the explanation of everything that is and takes place in the material world or corporeal universe. Indeed, for precisely that reason, he made extension an attribute of God, that is, so that the arising of bodies in the absence of a power to create could be explained by modification alone.

§696. (*Spinoza's error concerning nature.*) *Spinoza makes the power of nature the power of God, and removes all nature properly so-called from the bodies in which the world consists, or he makes nature properly so-called a non-being.* For the power of nature is the power to modify (*Nat. Theol.* I, §853), and Spinoza makes God's power into nothing else than a power to modify (§695). So, he makes the power of nature into the power of God, which was the first point to be proved.

The whole of nature is an aggregate of all of the powers of motion that are in the coexisting bodies in the world taken together (*Cosmol.* §507), and it contains the reason why these changes, rather than others, take place in the world (*Cosmol.* §505). For Spinoza recognizes no other power in God than that through which extension, as His attribute, is modified so that bodies and their alterations are produced in the material world (§671), and he makes it the power to modify extension (§695). He therefore removes all nature, properly so-called, from the bodies in which the world consists (*Cosmol.* §119), and denying that nature properly so-called can exist, he makes it into a non-being. This was the second point to be proved.

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In this matter, Spinoza is preceded by Descartes who, because he took extension to be the essence of body or an attribute, as he puts it, which expresses the same thing, but also noted that from the confused notion that he had of extension it followed that there was no power, such as a source of alterations, implanted in bodies (*Cosmol.* §136), inasmuch as it would be conceived (*Cosmol.* §301) as a substance different from matter or from what is extended (*Cosmol.* §141); so, he removed all active power from bodies and attributed it solely to God. Yet, if bodies are conceived without any activity, then because active power is their nature (*Cosmol.* §145) one would have to call nature a non-being (*Ont.* §137). For this reason, Robert Boyle called nature an idol, which cannot be imagined without injury to the supreme Being, and Sturm makes a spectacle of treating this word *nature* as an empty term.[21] It is, therefore, clear how necessary an understanding of the theory of elements treated in cosmology is, through which it is established that bodies are no less to be attributed an active power (*Cosmol.* §180) than they are an extension (*Cosmol.* §223), and why both should appear as two different substances (*Cosmol.* §301) since these are nothing more than substantiated phenomena (*Cosmol.* §300) whose reality is grounded in the elements (*Cosmol.* §192) and besides this there is nothing substantial given in bodies (*Cosmol.* §177). Spinoza undoubtedly distinguishes *natura naturans* from *natura naturata* in *Ethics* Ip29s,[22] but he along with Descartes takes *essence* and *nature* as synonyms, just as one commonly confuses essence with nature, and indeed as all those must so confuse them who do not count nature among beings and declare it an idol and a rival to the supreme Being. For he says that *natura naturans* is that which is in itself and conceived through itself, or through attributes that express its eternal and infinite essence, that is, it is God insofar as He is considered as a free cause (free, namely, from all external coercion); *natura naturata* however is that which follows from the necessity of God's nature, or from one of His attributes, that is, it is all the modes of God's attributes insofar as they are considered as things which are in God and which cannot be nor be conceived without God. As Spinoza himself states at IId2, to the essence of a thing belongs that "without which the thing can neither be nor be conceived and vice versa." Now since he maintains that God is to be conceived through such attributes as express an eternal and infinite essence (§672), but he takes the things, or particulars, that exist in addition to God for nothing more than modes by which God's attributes are expressed in a certain and determinate way (Ip25c), and so body is defined "as a mode that expresses God's essence in a certain and determinate way insofar as He is considered as an extended thing" (IId1); is it not then obvious that the entire distinction between *natura naturans* and *natura naturata* does not consist in the difference between the active power of particular things and that of God, but in the difference between the essences of particular things and that of God? As for the rest who do not distinguish at all between nature and essence, they must be said to confuse nature with God in the same way as Spinoza, since he also admits the difference between particular things which is derived from essence.[23] Thus it can happen that some explain the actuality of those things that have this essence differently, for

[21] See Robert Boyle's *A Free Inquiry into the Vulgarly Received Notion of Nature* (1686). Johann Christoph Sturm (1635–1703) was a natural philosopher in the Cartesian tradition who was influenced by Boyle (in for instance his *De naturae agentis idolo* of 1692).

[22] See §671n, above.

[23] The point here would appear to be that if one does not distinguish nature from essence, or denies that nature designates a distinct power on the part of an individual thing (as with Boyle and Sturm), then one will ultimately identify nature with God, since God contains the essences of all particular things even though particular things remain distinguished through their different individual essences.

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the disagreement between Spinoza and his opponents does not concern the essence of things (on which they agree) but their actuality. Furthermore, we have shown that one and the same power of the soul constitutes its essence and nature (*Rat. Psych.* §§66, 67). Yet, we have also shown that that this power does not, taken in the same respect, constitute the essence and nature of the soul; rather, it constitutes the soul's essence insofar as the soul is limited to these and not other representations, which are actualized in this and not some other order; however, it constitutes its nature insofar as these same representations are in fact brought to actuality (*Rat. Psych.* §68), so that through its nature those representations are brought to actuality which are only understood as possible through its essence. We thus sufficiently distinguish the soul's essence and its nature from one another, namely in a manner conformable to both notions. However, Spinoza could not admit this difference within the soul, given his attribution of the activity or power by which all that exists is brought to actuality solely to God, and thereby making *natura naturans*, in contrast to what he calls essence, a non-being.

§697. (*The impossibility that two substances of the same nature should exist according to Spinoza.*) *Spinoza has not proved that "in nature there cannot be two or more substances of the same nature"*[24] (Ip5). For the entire strength of the argument, on which the pretended demonstration rests, comes to this that two such substances could not be distinguished from one another, and so would have to be one and the same being.[25] Since he confuses attribute and essential determination (§679), this is just as much as to say that it is not possible to distinguish two substances, through their essence, when they have the same essence in common. Indeed, this results from his supposition that an attribute, through which is expressed the essence of substance (according to him) or (put more correctly) of a being (§673), is something unlimited, considered with all original limitations having been set aside, and so as constituting some kind of higher genus, like body in general; consequently it represents a sort of universal being (*Ont.* §230). Now since universals do not exist (*Ont.* §235) but there are only singular things that are thoroughgoingly determined (*Ont.* §§226, 227), and yet original limitations, which belong to essential determinations and are that through which the essences of things are differentiated, are connected with individual things in such a way as to be inseparable from them (*Nat. Theol.* I, §§894, 895); it is evident to all that Spinoza has hardly demonstrated that two or more substances of the same nature, or that have a common essence, are not possible in nature.

Spinoza is not helped by the fact that he does not take substance in the received signification (§683) but confuses it with being from itself (§684), and so it is just the same as if he had said that it is not possible to have two beings from themselves which have the same essence, a claim that would contain nothing estranged from truth. For Spinoza abuses this principle the better to camouflage his hypothesis. It is not fitting for a philosopher to confuse those things in his definitions which should be distinguished just so that he might allow ambiguities to be inferred that could not otherwise be inferred from them in any way. Since Spinoza unquestionably takes extension for an attribute that expresses infinite and eternal substance, it follows in virtue of this proposition that there is no more than one extended substance, that that substance is a

[24] In the original, Spinoza adds "*sive attributi* [or attribute]."

[25] See the demonstration of Ip5.

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being from itself, and that bodies are produced by means of continuous modification through the potency or power of that substance. From thence it is further concluded that the world is eternal and a necessary being, and that everything has taken place in it according to a fatal or immutable necessity, and neither is there a place in it for purposes; such inferences are also drawn by Spinoza. But even if Spinoza distinguishes the notion of being from itself and that of substance from one another, as would be proper, and he had demonstrated only the impossibility of more than one being from itself having exactly the same essence, then there would be no error to fear following from the conclusion. For this reason, it is necessary that one does not assume something to be demonstrated which cannot be admitted in the received signification of the terms, and that any ambiguity is removed which might lead us down a false path. The error of Spinoza stems from the fact that he took all limitations for modes and that he did not distinguish between original limitations, which are connected in themselves with essential determinations and permit of being conceived through themselves, which is to say not through the supposition of another thing, and changeable things, which are capable of alteration whereas the former remain the same, but also from the fact that he tacitly supposed that all substance must be infinite, and consequently that the reality through which it is conceived spurns any limits.

§698. (*The contrary is proved.*) *It is not contrary to the notion of substance in its received signification that there are multiple substances of the same kind (genus or species): in fact, this is actually the case.* For in its received signification, substance is a subject in which the *essentialia* and attributes remain the same while its modes are continuously altered (*Ont.* §770). Kinds retain the same *essentialia* (*Ont.* §§233, 234, 247), as well as the same attributes and the same modes that are conditionally asserted of these attributes (whether as proximate or remote possibilities) (*Ont.* §§268, 269). It is not at all contrary, then, to the notion of substance in the received signification that there are multiple substances of the same kind (genus or species). This was the first point to be proved.

A soul of any sort whatsoever is a substance (*Rat. Psych.* §48), and that it exists no one is able to call into doubt (*Emp. Psych.* §21). The essence of any soul whatsoever consists in the power of representing the world materially limited by the position of the organic body in the world and formally limited by the constitution of the sensory organs (*Rat. Psych.* §66). Accordingly, all souls have the same common essence and, since singular things belong to the same kind insofar as they have the same *essentialia* (*Ont.* §254), it follows that they all belong to the same kind. Therefore, there are in fact multiple substances of the same genus or species. Similarly, bodies are aggregates of simple substances (*Cosmol.* §176) which constitute their elements (*Cosmol.* §182). All elements belong to the same kind, as is clear from the complete doctrine of elements that was presented in our *Cosmology*. Therefore, there are as many substances of the same genus or species as there are elements of material things. From this it is once again clear that there are in actuality many substances of the same kind (genus or species). This was the second point to be proved.

Nor does one exempt themselves from this argument by claiming that the soul and the elements of material things are not substances in Spinoza's sense. For Spinoza does not take the word *substance* in the received signification and he tacitly injects *a-se-ity* into this notion (§684). He should, however, have taken substance in the received signification and then

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demonstrated, if he had been able to, that in that sense every substance would have to be a being from itself: yet he did not prove this nor could he prove it. To impose ambiguous words upon notions which do not belong in them, and not to demonstrate their reality, as Spinoza did, is not only contrary to the rules of proper method, but also a source of errors (*Log.* §631), for with the demonstrative method which Spinoza wanted to use in the construction of his system many errors follow from a single one (*Log.* §628). No one, therefore, will justly reprimand us that we take issue with Spinoza on the basis of true principles, and that we oppose what we have disclosed to be the falsity of deceptive notions and the conclusions deduced from them with propositions that have been demonstrated on the basis of true principles, unless they want to reject the best method of refutation (*Log.* §1036).

§699. (*The impossibility of creation has not been demonstrated by Spinoza.*) *Spinoza has not demonstrated that one substance cannot be produced by another substance, nor indeed that substance absolutely cannot be produced by anything else.* For, when he intends to demonstrate in Ip6 that one substance cannot be produced by another substance, and from there to infer in the corollary that a substance cannot be produced from anything else, he presumes as demonstrated that there cannot be two substances of the same attribute, or essence, or genus, or species, in nature. Yet, Spinoza has in no way proven this (§697), and indeed one could rather demonstrate the contrary (§698). Now since that has not yet been demonstrated the proof of which involves undemonstrated propositions, so even less can something be said to have been demonstrated if it involves propositions whose contraries are capable of being demonstrated; thus, it is evident that Spinoza has not demonstrated at all that one substance cannot be produced by another, nor indeed that substance cannot be produced in any way by anything else.

Spinoza of course also attempts to show indirectly that it is impossible for one substance to be produced by another,[26] yet the indirect demonstration he purports to give is no stronger than the direct one. For he claims that if one substance were produced by another, the cognition of it must depend on the cognition of its cause, and since he assumes in Iax4 that the cognition of the effect depends upon the cognition of the cause, it follows that it would not be a substance according to its definition (§674). However, one must in any case distinguish between the cognition of possibility and cognition of actuality. For, when it is claimed in the definition of substance that it is conceived through itself, where these words are understood to mean that the cognition of that being does not depend upon the cognition of any other being, this cannot mean anything else than that we can have a notion of this being and that we can demonstrate its possibility even when we do not suppose the notion of another being. This is the same as when we have the notion of an equilateral triangle, and we are able to demonstrate its possibility, even though we do not take into account the possibility of another figure such that the triangle is not conceived of as possible unless one also admitted that other figure to be possible and, consequently, that the triangle's possibility presupposed the possibility of something else. But, that which is caused depends upon its cause as far as its actuality or existence is concerned (*Ont.* §881), and thus we can understand through that which is contained in the cause why such a being, whose possibility is already otherwise established and would be

[26] The indirect proof follows the direct proof in Ip6, after the corollary.

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established even if it could be shown *per impossibilie* that its cause is not possible, attains to actuality, and consequently the cognition of its actuality or existence presupposes the cognition of the cause. Therefore, even if one admitted that substance is correctly defined in terms of that which is conceived through itself, nonetheless it would not at all follow from the fact that one supposes something to be produced by another thing that it is not capable of being conceived through itself. Although a Spinozist may object that in the definition it is added that substance is that which is in itself, and so the words that follow "and is conceived through itself" must be extended to actuality, it is easy to reply to this.[27] Namely, Spinoza would have to prove, concerning something that is understood to be possible without the presupposition of the possibility of another being, that its actuality or existence can be cognized (*a priori*, that is, through its notion) without having presupposed the existence of another being, something that Spinoza neither proved anywhere nor could he prove at all. However, Spinoza sets himself against the rules of correct logic when he collects terms in his definition where one is determined through the other (*Log.* §836), and makes use of ambiguous words (*Log.* §160), and indeed assumed something to be granted that must first be demonstrated before one can grant it. Moreover, while Spinoza takes himself to have demonstrated the impossibility of creation in the proposition in which he disputes the production of one substance from another, it is clear from the present proposition that that impossibility has in no way been proven on that basis, and neither, then, can the power to create which is attributed to God be counted an absurdity.

§700. (*The a-se-ity of substance is not demonstrated by Spinoza.*) *Spinoza has not demonstrated that substance necessarily exists.* For, when he intends to demonstrate in Ip7 that it pertains to the nature of substance to exist, he assumes that it cannot be produced by another thing. Yet, since he has not demonstrated that substance cannot be produced by another thing (§699), one also cannot say that he has demonstrated that it pertains to the nature of substance to exist, or that substance necessarily exists.

He errs, therefore, when he confuses substance with being from itself (§684), namely, when *a-se-ity* has been tacitly inserted into the notion of substance. Indeed, if one considers the notion of substance, that namely it is a subject of constant and variable determinations (*Ont.* §769), of which some are continuously changed while the rest remain the same (*Ont.* §762), then one will not at all be able to infer from this that substance necessarily exists. And even if you ventured to hold this quite apart from the fact that it does not follow as a consequence, the counter-examples of souls and elements would soon convince you of your error.

[27] A gloss of Wolff's argument here might be helpful. Wolff has just shown that, if we understand Spinoza's claim that substance is "conceived through itself" in terms of not presupposing the notion of some other thing in cognizing its *possibility*, then we must allow that being conceived through itself is not inconsistent with being produced by something else, since as far as its actuality is concerned it still presupposes its cause. Now, Wolff imagines the Spinozist objecting that, given that existence or actuality is mentioned in the first part of the definition (that substance is that which *is* in itself), the term to which the second part of the definition applies (that it is conceived for itself) must be taken in an extended sense such that it involves the cognition of the possibility *and* the actuality of some thing, that is, that through cognizing something to be possible without presupposing another being we thereby also cognize its actuality independently of any other being. It is to this latter objection that Wolff now proceeds to respond.

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§701. (*The contrary demonstrated.*) *Not all substance exists necessarily, or the essence of substance in no way involves necessary existence.* For the elements of material things and human souls are contingent beings (§331). Now since contingent beings do not have the sufficient reason for their existence in their essence (*Ont.* §310), to posit the essence of elements and of human souls is not yet to posit their existence (*Ont.* §118), and so their essence does not involve necessary existence. The elements, however, of material things (*Cosmol.* §182) and human souls are substances (*Rat. Psych.* §48). The essence of substance, therefore, does not involve necessary existence at all, and so not all substance exists necessarily.

It is also already clear from what we have noted in connection with the preceding proposition that the notion of substance does not involve necessary existence at all. The ambiguity of Spinoza's terms, namely, being in itself and being in another, not only introduces obscurity but also delivers the mind over to perplexity from which it is unsure how to extricate itself. Yet, nothing stands in the way of discerning the truth for someone who has once provisioned his mind with distinct and determinate ontological notions, the reality of which is manifest in things themselves. For this reason, I have already warned above (§672n) that Spinoza's definitions are to be examined carefully, especially since in them he assumed that which he does not prove and that which in his estimation stands in no need of proof because he deems it to be conceived of itself and he supposes all that to be true which can be so conceived. On account of this, we have recalled all of Spinoza's definitions for examination.

§702. (*The infinity of all substance is not demonstrated by Spinoza.*) *Spinoza has not demonstrated that all substance is necessarily infinite.* For when he seeks to demonstrate this he supposes that there is no more than one substance of the same attribute or kind, that this necessarily exists, and that if it had been finite, then it would have to be limited by another of the same nature or essence. However, he has not demonstrated that there cannot be two or more substances of the same nature (§697), nor has he proven that all substance exists necessarily (§700), but instead the contrary of both can be proven (§§698, 701). And moreover the terms he uses in his definition of a finite thing—that it is limited by another thing of the same nature or essence, as thinking would be limited by other thinking—are not only ambiguous and unsuited for a definition (§685), but also, even if they should be explicated in a way that makes tolerable sense of them, they do not hold for every kind of being (§686). It is therefore clear, as it was before (§§697, 699), that it has not been demonstrated by Spinoza that all substance is necessarily infinite.

It is abundantly clear from this that Spinoza's error expands continuously, as we should expect it to, given his use of the demonstrative method (*Log.* §628). For, when the error hiding in his principles and smuggled into his first propositions has been exposed, all that has been further deduced from them collapses of its own accord. Spinoza himself remarked that the infinity of substance in general would not readily be conceded on the basis of his demonstration: thus, he seeks to defend this position in the lengthy [second] scholium, and he charges those who think otherwise with "judg[ing] things confusedly" and not being "accustomed to know things through their first causes" [Ip7s2]. Indeed, we saw above that Spinoza is himself guilty of this failing (§687), namely insofar as he contents himself with confused perceptions, whence it transpires that he has not proven such first causes as really exist, but rather framed them in such a way so as to agree with his hypothesis.

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(§703); *so it is altogether false that there is not, nor can there be conceived, a substance outside of God, or that there is no substance unless it is one and infinite* (*Log.* §505).

If Spinoza had adequately distinguished being from itself from substance (though that he did not is well known—§684), and if he had not confused modes with being from another (§682) and had separated finitude in a more correct way from infinitude than he in fact did (§§677, 685); then he would not have fallen into the very uncommon error of holding that there is but one substance that is also infinite.

§706. (*Rejection of the spurious notion of infinite reality.*) *All infinite reality, and infinite thinking in particular, is not composed of finite realities which are infinite in number.* The human intellect, which no one can doubt is a reality (§5), is limited as far as its manner of representing objects is concerned, namely, not everything that is discernable in the intellect permits of being distinguished by it (*Emp. Psych.* §279). Thus, that intellect is unlimited which is capable of distinguishing in a given object everything that is discernable within it (*Ont.* §468). However, one might take as many intellects [of the former sort] as one likes, it will nonetheless never yield an intellect that in fact distinguishes everything discernable in a given object, but only a multitude of intellects, each of which is in no way able to distinguish all that is discernable in an object; consequently, a finite intellect is utterly heterogeneous from an infinite intellect (*Arithm.* §32). It is, therefore, clear that any infinite reality is not composed out of finite realities that are infinite in number. Since thought is perception accompanied by apperception (*Emp. Psych.* §26), and perception is an act of the mind by which it represents a given object to itself (*Emp. Psych.* §24), so concerning thought in particular it is likewise evident that it is not at all composed out of finite realities that are infinite in number.

This notion of infinity is only an imaginary one, from which Spinoza did not guard himself, even though he constantly reprimands others who, since they confuse imagination with the intellect, could not distinguish between those things which we imagine and those things that are conceived by us. For of the realities, as I call them, recognized by us, he admits no more than two as foremost, namely, extension and thought. Now since he had none other than a confused idea of extension (§688), which he wrongly takes for a reality (§689), he deemed himself to have an idea of infinite extension because for any given magnitude he could imagine a greater magnitude, and thus it seemed to him that he had produced the idea of infinite extension once a given finite or limited extension was replicated an infinite number of times, which notion of infinite quantity is only an imaginary one as we have previously shown elsewhere (*Ont.* §804). According to the similarity with infinite extension, he also imagined infinite thought, as if it arises from the continued, infinite addition of finite cognition. From this it occurred to him that infinite extension was composed of extended things infinite in number, and infinite thought composed of thinking things infinite in number, contrary to what we have demonstrated in the present section. Had he considered, however, that a finite thing is conceived through limits that are necessarily connected with it, then he would have noted that the notion of the infinite is produced through the removal of all limits. Now since the figure of an extended thing is its limit (*Ont.* §621), he should have recognized that we do not have the idea of infinite extension before it has been demonstrated that there can be an extended thing without any limits whatsoever. And because there are limits to thinking, or to the act of

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representing possible things in the mind so that we are conscious of them (*Emp. Psych.* §23), given that we cannot represent everything distinctly at the same time, so we could not understand the idea of infinite thought before it has been demonstrated that it is possible to represent all possible things distinctly or adequately at the same time, or that there exists a subject to which such a representation pertains. From this, Spinoza would have learned that infinite thought contains all finite or limited thoughts that are conceived as possible only eminently, that is, insofar as it assumes their place (*Ont.* §845).

§707. (*Spinoza's false notion of thinking things is demolished.*) *Finite thinking things do not arise through the modification of infinite thought, taken as a divine attribute, nor can they be called modes of a divine attribute, namely of infinite thought.* For suppose, if it is possible, that finite or limited thinking things arise through the modification of infinite thought, which is considered as a divine attribute, that is, as something that expresses or constitutes the infinite essence of God (§673). Since a being is said to arise insofar as it begins to exist (*Ont.* §541), a thinking thing exists insofar as infinite thought is modified, where infinite thought is considered as a divine attribute constituting the essence of God, and infinite thinking things must exist insofar as that attribute is modified in infinite ways. Therefore, an infinite number of thinking things taken at the same time constitute infinite thought, and these make up God's essence or it is composed from these. But since this is absurd (§706), it is impossible that finite or limited thinking beings arise through the modification of infinite thought considered as a divine attribute. Which was the first claim to be proved.

Since, therefore, finite thinking things do not arise through the modification of infinite thought considered as a divine attribute, as has been demonstrated, it is clear of itself that these cannot be called modes of a divine attribute, namely, of infinite thought. Which was the second claim to be proved.

If Spinoza had sought distinct notions of limit (without which a sufficiently distinct notion of a limited being cannot be had) and of infinite thought, and had not inferred from an imaginary notion of infinite extension to infinite thought, then, he would scarcely have failed to notice that thinking beings cannot possibly arise from the limitation of infinite thought such that they would actually exist in God as things pertaining to His essence and could not possibly be conceived without Him in any way. Having an idea of the soul is essential to the soul, insofar as it is conscious of itself, and since the soul is limited (*Rat. Psych.* §63), we have an idea of limited thought, to use Spinoza's phrase, even when no thought of God occurs to the mind. The idea of infinite thinking, however, arises through the removal of the limitations which are in the former idea (*Nat. Theol.* I §1095), and the reality of this idea of infinite thinking is demonstrated from the fact that any given reality taken in the absolutely highest degree is possible (§12). Yet, that the existence or actuality of the soul, a finite thinking thing, cannot be conceived without God, that is, that its existence could not be demonstrated *a priori*, cannot be established until one has proven its contingency (§§331, 335–38). And when one has ultimately traced all things back to their first cause, namely God, only at that point is it possible to understand the dependence of the idea of the soul on God (§97). In this way, however, souls are finite substances without which God can surely exist but which cannot exist without God and, thus, creatures are suitably distinguished from their creator in accordance with the received doctrine, making it unnecessary to deviate from it as Spinoza appeared to.

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From this it is once again clear that, in these exceedingly difficult matters, we can expect illumination from no other quarter than from ontology, and it is no wonder that those who condemn or neglect it, or only treat of it in a superficial manner, should end up tapping around blinded by their own shrewdness.

§708. (*Spinoza's error concerning the notion of bodies and souls.*) *Bodies and souls are not in God as parts are in a whole, nor can they be said to be particles of God.* For let us suppose, if it were possible, that bodies and souls are in God as parts are in a whole. Since the whole is just all parts taken together (*Ont.* §341), God would be all bodies taken together and all souls taken together, or these would at least be something that necessarily existed in God and without which God could not be or be conceived. God would therefore actually contain all bodies and souls as things pertaining to His essence. Accordingly, we cannot conceive of that which is attributed to God as infinite in any but the following way: all possible modifications are actually contained in Him, where these modifications consist in nothing else than the variation of limits (*Ont.* §830); consequently, bodies as well as souls arise in God Himself through the modification of a divine attribute. Since, therefore, neither bodies (§694) nor souls arise through the modification of some divine attribute (§707), neither the former nor the latter could be in God as parts are in a whole, which was the first point to be proved.

Since bodies and souls are not in God as parts are in a whole, as has been demonstrated, it further follows from this of itself that neither bodies nor souls are particles of God, which was the second point to be proved.

There were some among the ancient philosophers who called the soul a particle of the divine mind.[30] That, however, these philosophers did not take bodies to be particles of God is evidently the result of their holding the matter that bodies consist of for a being from itself, and so something co-eternal with God. Spinoza explicitly declares the human mind a part of the divine intellect in Ip11c, and in Ip31 and Ip17s he denies that the intellect, whether it be finite or infinite, actually pertains to the nature of God; and he ridicules those who count the intellect and the will among the divine attributes. Whence he further claims in IIp11c that, "when we say that the human mind perceives this or that, we are saying nothing but that God, not insofar as he is infinite, but [...] insofar as he constitutes the essence of the human mind, has this or that idea; and when we say that God has this or that idea, not only insofar as he constitutes the nature of the human mind, but insofar as he also has the idea of another thing together with the human mind, then we say that the human mind perceives a thing only partially or inadequately." Since all particular things are nothing if not modes through which God's attributes are expressed in a certain and determinate way (by Ip15c), and extension (in IIp2) no less than thought (IIp1) is called an attribute of God, or God is taken as an extended thing no less than a thinking thing, and bodies are defined (in IId1,[31] in virtue of Ip25c) as a mode which expresses God's essence, insofar as it is considered as an extended thing, in a certain and determinate way; then according to Spinoza, a given body will have to be a part of

[30] Among the adherents of this view are Pythagoras and his disciples, and Seneca; see Aldo Setaioli, "Seneca and the Divine: Stoic Tradition and Personal Developments," in *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 13.3 (2007), pp. 333–68.

[31] Wolff erroneously refers to "*def.* I *part.* I" here.

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God, just as he makes the soul or human mind into a part of the divine intellect. Nor should one fear that we have misconstrued Spinoza's opinion here, on account of the fact that substance does not pertain to the essence of the human being (IIp10[32]) but rather is constituted by certain modifications of God's attributes (IIp10c), and so the same thing must be said concerning bodies and thinking things, like the soul, in all such matters. As Spinoza confuses substance with being from itself (§684), and as he removes substantiality from bodies and souls, so he likewise removes *a-se-ity* from them. Accordingly, if the notion of substance is corrected and made to conform to common usage, then one could say without injury that Spinoza makes bodies and souls into parts of the divine substance, such that nothing substantial is to be encountered in them unless it pertains to the divine substance. But, so that we would not give the Spinozists cause to complain (though they might do so anyway) that we imputed something to them that was utterly foreign to their way of thinking, we have preferred to avoid this terminology, which even they must admit in the received signification.

§709. (*Universal fatalism of Spinoza.*) *Spinoza is a universal fatalist.* According to Spinoza, there is nothing contingent in nature, but all things are determined from the necessity of the divine nature to a certain mode of existing and acting (Ip29), and whatever follows necessarily from an attribute of God necessarily exists (Ip12). So the will cannot be called a free cause but rather only a necessary one (Ip32), and thus God does not produce an effect through free will (Ip32c1), which is to say that "things could have been produced by God in no other way and in no other order than they have been produced" (Ip33[33]). Nor is there any free will in the human mind but it is determined to will this or that by a cause which is determined by another and this in turn by another, and so on without end (IIp48), and human beings only believe themselves to be free insofar as they are conscious of their volitions and do not think, even in their dreams, of the causes by which they are disposed to willing (Iapp). It is evident, therefore, that Spinoza defends the absolute necessity of everything in the world and, having denied the freedom of the human will, that he extends this same necessity to human actions. Accordingly, since one is a universal fatalist who defends the absolute necessity of all things and extends this same necessity to human actions (§528), Spinoza is a fatalist, and indeed of the universal sort.

Spinozists do not dispute that they are fatalists, nor do they deny being universal fatalists: for they claim that universal fatalism is something that accords with the truth. For this reason, fatalism, and particularly the universal variety, is often simply misidentified with Spinozism in such a way that one tends to call those Spinozists to whom a fatal necessity might be imputed even only as a consequence of their views. However, although universal fatalism is connected with Spinozism by an indissoluble bond, it is nevertheless not to be identified with it (§§528, 671).

§710. (*Universal fatalism is falsely asserted by Spinoza.*) *Spinoza has not demonstrated the fatal necessity of all things, nor can it be demonstrated.* Since when Spinoza seeks to demonstrate this (Ip16), he maintains that everything which can fall under an infinite intellect follows from the necessity of the divine nature, and from this he

[32] Wolff erroneously refers to the first book of the *Ethics* here and in the next reference.
[33] Wolff incorrectly refers to Ip32.

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infers (Ip17) that God acts from the necessity of His nature alone since there is nothing outside Him by which He might be determined to act. However, he proves that all things follow with necessity from the divine nature from the claim that "the intellect infers from the given definition of any thing [...] that which really does necessarily follow from it, that is, from the very essence of the thing."[34] Yet, what Spinoza infers here does not follow at all. For if he had not accepted imaginary notions of infinite thought (§707) and of extension (§689) as real and had not attributed both to God as attributes that express His infinite essence (§671), then he would never have inferred that all things necessarily follow from thence. But if he had had a distinct conception of the limited realities that are in the soul, and had attributed them to God in the absolutely highest degree (§70), he would have recognized that an infinite intellect pertains to God (§§117, 118) and he would have recognized that only the essences of things, or whatever is possible, necessarily follow from it (§94); he would have also seen that the divine intellect and power are not the sufficient reason for why a given finite being exists (§349), nor therefore are finite things actually posited when the divine intellect and power are posited (*Ont.* §118), but rather the will of God (§350), which is the freest of all, is also required (§277). It is therefore clear that Spinoza has not demonstrated the absolute necessity of all things.

Indeed, God freely created human souls (§338) along with the whole world (§354), free even from any internal coercion (§355) insofar as He choose this world out of the various possible ones, and so every finite being (§330), the soul as well as the world, is a contingent being (§332), and nothing exists unless it does so contingently (§334) and even the order of nature is merely contingent and free from absolute necessity (*Cosmol.* §561 and note; *Nat. Theol.* I, §761). Therefore, it is clear of itself, since whatever is demonstrated must be true (*Log.* §544), that it would not at all be possible for the absolute necessity of things to be demonstrated by Spinoza.

Whatever is derived from the notion of free will by means of inferences, follows necessarily from it, since whatever is ascribed to it in this way must agree with the freedom of the will. However, it does not at all follow from it that the will itself is unable to be free, or that no other freedom could agree with it, unless it were a freedom from external coercion, which is the only sort of freedom Spinoza recognizes when he maintains that God alone is a free cause. We see all the more, then, that the fatalism of Spinoza depends upon his definitions which, having been fabricated to suit his hypothesis, suffer from numerous defects as we have noted above.

§711. (*The falsity of Spinoza's hypothesis.*) *Spinozism is a false hypothesis.* For according to Spinoza's hypothesis, there is nothing other than a single substance, endowed with infinite attributes, of which two are infinite thought and extension and each of which expresses an eternal and infinite essence; and finite beings arise from the necessary modification of the attributes of that substance, namely God, as for instance souls arise from the modification of infinite thought and bodies from the modification of infinite extension (§§671, 672). Yet, Spinoza has not demonstrated that, beyond God, there cannot be, nor be conceived, another substance, or that there

[34] This is taken from the demonstration of Ip16.

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should exist in nature for which there is no natural sufficient cause at all. Accordingly, since a miracle does not take place except when the natural causes are lacking for determining the actuality of that which is possible (*Cosmol.* §518), so according to Spinoza it is impossible that a miracle should ever occur, and thus he numbers miracles among impossible things. Yet, God can perform a miracle whenever he wants (*Nat. Theol.* I §363). It is therefore as clear as before (§712) that Spinoza errs when he numbers miracles among impossible things.

In the *Theological-Political Treatise* (ch. 6, 68ff[35]), Spinoza rejects miracles on the basis of the absolute necessity of the order of nature, the contingency of which and freedom from such necessity I have established elsewhere (*Cosmol.* §561), and he contends that miracles mean "nothing but a work whose natural cause we cannot explain by the example of another familiar thing, or at least which cannot be so explained by the one who writes or relates the miracle"[36] such that a miracle could be defined in a manner conformable to what Spinoza intends as an unfamiliar effect of nature whose cause is unknown to the common person. We are thus not imputing something to Spinoza that he expressly denies only as a consequence of his claims but, rather, what is imputed to him is something he defends as true inasmuch as he is well aware of what follows as a consequence of his hypothesis. From thence he infers, quite in conformity with his hypothesis, that all of the miracles related in Scripture were natural occurrences (p. 76[37]), and he ventures to show by means of a few examples how they can take place, and he does so with such confidence in his hypothesis that he is not ashamed to conclude on p. 77 that "if anything should be found which can be conclusively demonstrated to be contrary to the laws of nature, or to have been unable to follow from them, we must believe without reservation that it has been added to the Sacred Texts by sacrilegious men."[38] From this it is understood how harmful Spinozism is, and how necessary it was for me to show in the clearest possible terms the slippery foundation on which it rests, something which I trust I have shown in the foregoing. As for the rest of Spinoza's system, from what has been demonstrated in the previous sections concerning this impious hypothesis it is readily understood that the fundamental errors hiding in Spinozism can scarcely be discerned except by someone who has been inculcated with distinct ontological notions derived from things themselves; and so it assuredly goes without saying how necessary it is that we should invest indefatigable efforts in the study of ontology. For which reason we have previously taken the opportunity to advise, and now seek to impress upon the reader once again (since one cannot do so enough), that the neglect of first philosophy prevented Spinoza from recognizing the fundamental errors from which the rest of his system proceeds, and the very same neglect must prevent others, upon reading Spinoza's writings, from extricating themselves from the difficulties in which they become entangled thereby, and especially when they were not sufficiently trained in the [mathematical] method.

§714. (*The destruction of religion through Spinozism.*) *Spinozists are irreligious, or religion is nothing to them.* For Spinozists are fatalists, and indeed of the universal

[35] Wolff's reference here is to the original version of the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670), though in that edition the sixth chapter begins on p. 67.

[36] See *Collected Works of Spinoza*, vol. 2, p. 155.

[37] See *Collected Works of Spinoza*, vol. 2, pp. 159–61.

[38] *Collected Works of Spinoza*, vol. 2, pp. 163–4.

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sort (§709). However, if one is a universal fatalist then one is irreligious (§571); therefore, Spinozists are irreligious.

The demonstration by which we showed that religion is destroyed through universal fatalism can readily be applied to Spinozism. According to Spinoza, no freedom of action is left to God, and because no wisdom is granted to Him (§712n), no ends are admitted in nature (§712) nor does the direction of all that which occurs in the world in accordance with certain ends belong to God. Now since divine governance consists in just this direction (*Nat. Theol.* I, §899), according to Spinoza God does not govern the world in any way, and so Spinoza negates that which is most essential to divine providence (*Nat. Theol.* I, §922). When one considers this, one will easily see that Spinozism cannot sustain any religion. For although he commends the cognition of God many times at IVp28, there is nonetheless no more in this cognition in terms of genuine reverence than there is in the cognition of nature, something which we diligently pursue only because of the pleasure it brings us. It is well known that Spinoza sought the highest human good in the theoretical cognition of truth,[39] and that according to his hypothesis the cognition of God is the same as the cognition of natural things through their causes. From this it is once again apparent how harmful Spinozism is as an enemy of all religion. He who might want to know the mind of Spinoza, and his disposition with respect to religion, should read his *Theological-Political Treatise* himself as it is not our intention here to paint a vivid portrait of this text.

§715. (*Our divine obligation to certain actions is destroyed by Spinozism.*) *Spinozists negate all divine obligation to committing virtuous actions and omitting vicious ones.* For Spinozists are fatalists, and of the universal sort (§709), but if one is a universal fatalist, then one negates divine obligation (§544); therefore, Spinozists negate divine obligation.

The Spinozists deny, namely, that the soul's will is free, and so according to their hypothesis the human being necessarily acts in the way it does and it is determined by natural causes to act thus and not otherwise, and neither is it able to render itself undetermined; indeed, since everything is ultimately determined by God to be thus and not otherwise, and God is not able to determine anything to be otherwise than it is determined to be, so one cannot even imagine a divine obligation according to Spinozism. Nonetheless, this does not prevent Spinoza from granting that it is far better if a human being live according to reason than if they lead a life contrary to it, and this despite his denial that the human being can, through his free will, make his actions conform to his reason. Yet, Spinoza judges the human being who lives according to reason to be more perfect than another who leads his life contrary to it. Indeed, it is certain that Spinoza himself led a very moderate life, that he was inclined to the service of others and far removed from doing any harm to them. As for the rest of the consequences which flow from here that are destructive to the truth and practice of morality, when all divine obligation to commit some actions and omit others should be counted as nothing, and the human being is not left the power to live otherwise than how he in fact lives, it should not be necessary for us to show in the present context that which even the least perspicuous mind might see for itself.

[39] See Vp27.

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PART IV

The Limits of Reason

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Christian August Crusius: *Philosophical Dissertation on the Use and Limits of the Principle of Determining Reason, commonly called the Principle of Sufficient Reason* (1743)

Christian August Crusius was born June 10, 1715 in Leuna, a town just south of Halle, the son of a parson and a parson's daughter. Crusius attended Gymnasium in nearby Merseberg beginning in 1729, and in 1734 the university in Leipzig. There he studied a number of subjects, but was drawn particularly to theology and, through the lectures of the Thomasian thinker Adolph Friedrich Hoffmann (1707–41), to philosophy. Crusius attained his *Magister* in philosophy in 1737, habilitated in 1740 with a dissertation on the corruption of the human intellect, and went on to receive a baccalaureate in theology in 1742. Crusius nonetheless sought a position in the philosophy faculty, to qualify for which he defended two dissertations, the second being the *Dissertatio philosophica de usu et limitibus principii rationis determinantis, vulgo sufficientis* (*Philosophical Dissertation on the Use and Limits of the Principle of Determining Reason, commonly called the Principle of Sufficient Reason*) which was published in 1743. In 1744, Crusius became extraordinary professor of philosophy at the university in Leipzig. Crusius' major philosophical works followed in quick succession, with his textbook on ethics (*Anweisung vernünftig zu Leben*, or *Guide to Rational Living*) published in 1744; his metaphysics textbook (*Entwurf der nothwendigen Vernunft-Wahrheiten* or *Sketch of the Necessary Truths of Reason*) in 1745; and a book on logic (*Weg zur Gewißheit und Zuverläßigkeit der menschlichen Erkenntniß* or *Path to the Certainty and Reliability of Human Cognition*) in 1747. A book on physics followed in 1749, after which Crusius shifted his attention to theology, accepting an ordinary professorship in the faculty in 1750. And while he did not publish any substantial (new) philosophical works for the rest of his career, he did not resign from his previous position and continued to lecture in philosophy. He died October 18, 1775.

Crusius is widely, and rightly, regarded as the most sophisticated philosopher within the "Thomasian-Pietistic" tradition. Like the thinkers in this tradition,

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